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**Rosemary Press
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**In The Sunshine
at Havana**

By

Charles Dana Burrage







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IN THE SUNSHINE AT HAVANA

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HURRYING FROM HAVANA—(1906)

By Atherton Brownell

CUBA—LAND OF SUGAR AND SPENDTHRIFTS

By Alfred J. Thompson



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IN THE SUNSHINE AT HAVANA

By Charles Dana Burrage

In the first place, Havana, in Spanish, Habana, is fortunate in its name—probably of Cuban Indian derivation—the land of the Abanas. Then it is so distinctively Spanish, so un-American in every way, so suggestive of Old World habits and Tropical languor; and this, too, in spite of the fact that its stores are largely filled with very evidently American-made goods, and that one sees everywhere American electric cars and American automobiles.

The approach to the city from the sea is striking—even beautiful. With the ancient castle on the high Morro (or height) on the left, and the low sweep of the crowded city on the right, across the very narrow entrance to the harbour within, the first sight of Havana interests one extremely. The narrow streets, barely wide enough between the curbs to let two vehicles pass, where the sidewalks are often but a foot wide, so that the street car crowds the pedestrians into single file, and an open umbrella cannot survive; these multitudinous, unending, crowded narrow streets of Havana appeal instantly to the lover of the picturesque. For there are limitless vistas opening every moment before you; on every side glimpses through open doorways far back into the patios, or inner open-to-the-air court yards, that are inseparable from every residence in this land of sunshine; passing, fragmentary views of the sacred inner home life so carefully kept behind the forbidding front of the dwelling, as is usual among all the Latins, and particularly so in the warmer parts of Spanish America.

The first glance at a Havana building impresses the beholder, for one sees every window opening screened with iron, either with plain, straight, horizontal or upright bars, or with grille work in plain, or sometimes, fanciful designs of scroll and arabesque work, very solid and substantial. There are no windows of glass in Havana, they appear to be unnecessary. Only shutters of varying kinds fill the openings behind the iron bars or grille work. The

lover, talking with his inamorata through this lattice of unyielding and inexorable iron, is a common sight. The wistful faces of children peer out through the bars, suggestive of prison discipline and control.

Every building comes to the exact and limited edge of the all-too-narrow sidewalk; the passers-by are within a few inches of the pale, oval-faced daughters of the Sun leaning against the curving, twisting scrolls of iron. The houses, narrow on the street, with only party walls between, (never by any chance any opening, or area, or alley, or court,) extend far back into the middle of long blocks. They cannot but be crowded in these narrow abodes, for the children seem to live in the streets. Everywhere they abound, all the varying shades from clear white to darkest black, all with the least possible clothing on, which in the poorer sections means none at all, on those of very tender years. Stopping for a moment to catch a kodak of a baby girl just old enough to toddle along the sidewalk, we were instantly besieged to take pictures of many others; one mother, pathetic in her eagerness, beseeching our attention to a handsome crippled boy in a wide box, lying clear and sharp in the shade, down a crowded, reeking court way.

All the buildings are low, one or two stories usually, and all of brick covered with cement, or of white limestone blocks. We saw one house, only, built of cement blocks, arranged in imitation of the "*rustic*" finish so popular in the far West many, many years ago. This solid form of architecture undoubtedly is directly due to the climate, and is the result of long experience—some say that the superabundant and voracious ant would soon eat out the timbers, if of wood. But the survival of the iron bars is rather curious in this twentieth century. Evidently the first settlers of Havana found their pirate neighbors, who so thronged the countless islands of the Caribs' Sea, and the densely-wooded shores along the Spanish Main, too urgent in their attentions, for, as we read in history, Havana was many times attacked by these rovers of the sea.

Not only great forts arose on every side and vast subterranean defences were excavated in the hills to protect the city, but every householder protected himself. He built his house with solid walls and iron-barred windows, closely joined to his neighbor's, and made his front door of solid mahogany, massive, heavily barred, and secure against any small pirate gang. They say they retain these

ancient habits of protection, because the numerous blacks are so covetous of other people's personal property that nothing is safe unless guarded. Very likely, but it is probable that in a land where the shutters must be open at night for comfort, the grim iron protective screen serves an excellent purpose.

The "old" or original city is wonderfully attractive. It, as well as New York, has a "Wall" street marking the ancient line of fortification; unlike New York, a small section, a salient angle surmounted by a bastion, of this original wall has been kept, and will now unquestionably be preserved forever. Yet in all Havana no photograph, not even a stray postal card, could be found showing this most striking, interesting and ancient land-mark. I have promised myself the pleasure of enlarging a small kodak of this venerable ruin, to hang in grateful honor above my office desk, as a reminder of a pleasant visit.

A whole day, long, arduous, most tiring, yet supremely rewarded, may be spent at the ancient and stupendous fortresses of Cabanas and Morro, just across the bay. History has much to tell of these, all of bloody deeds, cruelties, sufferings and wrongs.

In the "Laurel Ditch," the high wall is pitted deeply for a distance of 85 feet with bullet holes, where suspected Cuban patriots were shot in almost daily groups lined against the wall, to the number of thousands, in all, by Weyler's orders.

The views of moats, drawbridges and ramparts; the old Spanish bronze cannon of Ferdinand and Isabella, now as useless as the forts themselves; the great system of subterranean defenses; the torture room at Morro; the dungeons deep in the rock under Cabanas, without light, where patriots were thrust, to linger miserably, without food or water, unvisited until death came, all seem like pictures from the "Old World" rather than by our own doors here in the New World.

In Vedado, the residence suburb within the city limits, largely American, one finds in the front areas and gardens that luxuriance of flower and shrub we are wont to associate with the tropics. Here every house has a porch, and every porch, almost, has a flaming mass of magenta-colored Bougainvilleas, with an occasional pink, or scarlet or golden-yellow wreath of blossoms to keep it company. Everywhere the Royal Palm stretches to the sky; everywhere the delicately divided foliage of the graceful Royal Poinciana

is seen; in its season the whole tree a fiery ball of flaming scarlet. The wide range of Cuban flora may be seen to advantage in the beautiful Botanical and Tropical Gardens. Even here in Vedado the walls are solid, even here every window opening (with but a very few exceptions) is covered with graceful and intricately wrought iron grilles.

When a number of these narrow one-storied white-walled houses are seen side by side, each with a roofed-over white-solid-porch and a little white fenced-in garden in front, they look exactly like a larger edition of the pathetic little fenced-in grave lots of the poor in the vast Colon cemetery. And they carry a heart-ache too, remembering that these little grave lots (for they are only just large enough for a single grave) are *rented* not *sold*. The sum of ten dollars pays for five years' use, when, if a further payment remains unpaid, the grave is emptied, the bones being thrown into the great "boneyard" where thousands upon thousands of skulls and miscellaneous human bones keep dreadful company—a shame and disgrace to such a rich city as Havana.

But this is not the only disgraceful thing to be seen there. Far out on the embankment by the sea, nearly out to Vedado, facing the distant shores of America, there remain, stored in a shed with a "danger" sign nearby, the sacred relics of the "Maine," presented to the Cuban Government for use in a permanent memorial, at the time (1912) the shattered hulk of the betrayed battleship was raised from its bed of mud in the harbour, and towed out to sea, to sink to eternal rest in the ocean's depths—with the Stars and Stripes nailed to its mast head. Oblivious to her duty, Cuba flaunts her careless disregard for these historic mementos in the face of all men—a flagrant breach of faith—her promises broken—her honor tarnished—an insult, growing deeper every day, to the United States, which by its blood and treasure bought Cuba's freedom—whose Navy is Cuba's sole reliance against a foreign foe. Without a navy, without an army, with her forts and defences antiquated and entirely useless, with all the antique guns upon their ramparts rusty and worthless, Cuba rests supinely helpless, relying absolutely and entirely upon the treaty promise of the United States to protect her in any case of need. It is well for Cuba that America's promises are not written in the sand, but will be kept in both spirit and letter. Why should Cuba so fail in her duty?

Under the hateful Spanish rule conditions in Havana were onerous, and taxes high. Under the brief American administration taxes were reduced to low and entirely reasonable figures and the City kept clean. Under the Cuban regime, however, taxes are now higher than they ever were under Spanish dominion, and the City's care of its streets and markets is growing slack, quite perceptibly. Does the answer lie here?

But these irritations are lost in the glory of the Sunshine; the beauties of a land just within the lines of the Tropics; the quaintly interesting street scenes of Havana, and the countless allurements, enticements and seductive attractions of the "City beautiful." The departing steamer passes swiftly Northward between the Malecon,—the curving boulevard embankment,—and Morro,—the great fortress on the height opposite. We turn our eyes gratefully, wistfully, longingly to the entrancing picture of sea and city spread before us. Once, in our youth, we stood at midnight by the Trevi fountain at Rome, to observe the ancient tradition that a traveler, on departing, by taking a drink of the water at that hour and casting a coin into the basin would ensure his return to Rome.

So again we lift the beaker in a vow, (that has been kept,) that we would return to Havana the Beautiful, the City of Sunshine.

CUBA AND HAVANA

FROM

OTHER VIEW-POINTS

HURRYING FROM HAVANA

By Atherton Brownell

[Special Correspondence of the Boston Transcript]

Havana, March 17, 1906.

During the present season more than 25,000 American visitors to Havana have registered. How many more there are who have not recorded their presence it is not possible to say. Today there is hardly a pleasure-seeker in Havana who could get passage away from Cuba in the wild scramble for home that has forced steamship companies to double their service, and first-class passengers to occupy intermediate staterooms amid the smell of cooking and the yelling of infants, or pay double or treble prices for staterooms of the officers. Had the dreaded yellow fever broken out the rush could scarcely have been worse. Yet there is no yellow fever, no increase in the death rate, no epidemic of illness, nor local fear of such; the weather is as wonderful, the sky as clear, and the gayety of the natives—always an attraction—as great. Out of this all guests have fled to a climate that in the middle of March possesses possibilities for colds in the head, pneumonia, and bronchitis, that are unknown in Cuba. Like the statement of the plague in the fable, "I killed only one-half the people, fear killed the rest."

And yet this statement is only partly true. The homeward rush of the Cuban visitors previous to March 15 is due to no remote fear of possible disease, but to the desire to avoid the certainty of detention at quarantine at the home ports of all passengers leaving Havana after this date—a date as arbitrarily set as that which determines when a New York apartment house janitor shall turn off the steam in the spring whatever the weather conditions may be. That the date for the establishment of the quarantine was this year delayed after the strenuous work of Edmund C. Vaughan, president of the American Club, only makes the injustice to Cuba the more marked since the announcement of the postponement did not come until after practically everybody had packed and was ready to depart.

The action of the Southern ports of the United States in establishing with a brass band a quarantine against Havana on March 15, rain or shine, is generally credited more to local jealousy than to reasonable sanitary precautions, principally because of the fact that Havana has had no such record for yellow fever as that established, for instance, by New Orleans last summer, but the loud proclamation of the quarantine spreads a fear abroad that is damaging to the highest degree to Havana and to a large extent unjust, for Havana and the other cities of Cuba enjoy a death rate that is low compared with other Southern cities, and surprisingly low considering the well-known lack of as complete sanitary facilities as are commonly thought to be desirable.

Looking over the vital statistics of Havana, it is to be noted that when all is said there is very little difference between the death rate here and in New York. In the latter city it averages less than twenty to every thousand, while in Havana for the past year it has averaged 20.3. London's low death rate of 14.9 was equalled by Havana during one month last year, and it is worthy to note further that in the month when yellow fever was most prevalent the death rate was the lowest with this single exception. The Louisiana death rate for 1902-3 was: White, 17.91; colored, 30.18; an average of 24.05. In the entire United States, from July 21 to Dec. 29, 1905, there were 907 deaths from yellow fever, of which 460 were in New Orleans. In all the world otherwise there were during this same period 1648 deaths from yellow fever, of which twenty-three were in Havana.

The charge is made against Havana that it has no sewers, and it is a charge that cannot be escaped. In reply, however, your Havanese points out that his city has a water supply unexcelled elsewhere in the world, and that is as true as his companion statement that, even if rents, hotels, food, and clothing are high, you can buy roses for one dollar a dozen. The water supply of Havana is perfect and simple. Thirty-three springs well up from the coral reef that underlies Cuba, and supply the city with 150 gallons per capita every day of the purest water it is possible to find, while little old New York, with its sky-scrapers, its multitudes of faucets, its hotels, its fires, and its great floating population, has to struggle along on ninety gallons a day for each inhabitant. What they do with their 150 gallons in Havana is hard to say. They do not drink

it. They do not bathe to any great extent. They have few fires, and sanitary plumbing is one of the things to which the natives are not yet educated.

Yet, in spite of these things, the health of the city is as has been indicated, and the death rate would be decreased by almost one-half if consumption could be exterminated, for it is practically the cause of as many deaths as all other diseases combined. It has often been noted in the Philippines, where the inhabitants are physically weak, that nothing but the warmth of the climate keeps the people alive, but here in Cuba, where the life is so much out of doors, and where the open air has the freest possible access to all the houses, consumption holds the sway, and makes the inroads of the dreaded yellow fever insignificant. The generally assigned cause is that it is a heritage from Spanish rule, a legacy from General Weyler, for the results of his reconcentrado policy did not cease with the starvation of the time, but so undermined the physical strength of the nation that consumption remained intrenched, even after the Spaniards had evacuated the city. The quarantine is not against the real and existent consumption, however, but against the more or less fancied *fiebre amarilla*.

Throughout Cuba the same anomalous condition presents itself, of poor sanitary precaution and a comparatively low death rate. Cardenas, for instance, is one of the healthiest cities in Cuba, and yet its water service is, or has been, shamefully neglected. Here the natural supply is perfect—an underground river, which has but to be tapped to pour forth all of the water that is needed. The water works here have long been in the hands of a Spaniard who so unmercifully charged the people for water that it became too great a luxury, and recently he was glad to part with his concession to a new company—American, of course—which has already improved the service, and lowered the rates so that the citizens of Cardenas can really bathe if it pleases them so to do. Out of a population of 25,000, there are but 900 users of water, partly because they are slow to move, and partly because the *Ayuntamiento*, or municipal government, is not sufficiently awake to its manifest duty to create any of the requirements that are demanded in all modern cities. Because of the low death rate the Cubans are perhaps to be excused for feeling some heat at the quarantine regulations of the Southern ports of the United States, causing them, as

it does, hundreds of thousands of dollars yearly, in loss of patronage of their merchants, but until these same Cubans remove the stigma of lack of sewers as in Havana and lack of regulations for the use of water in Cardenas, their complaints will not have full standing in the court of public opinion in the United States.

Cuba suffers further from the existence of the most harmful advertising that it is possible to create, that of spoken words of disgusted, discouraged, and disheartened fortune-seekers who have been lured here by the glowing literature of unscrupulous land sharks. For the most part these are Americans who have devoted a small capital to the purchase of worthless lands or have acquired them by option and have then invested heavily in printer's ink to attract the discontented farmers of the North with their word-painting of the charms and delights of farming in the semi-tropics. Some of these fakes have been unconscionable in their boldness, in one case the advertisement reading "first-class savannah lands." Now the word "savannah" has a definite meaning, it comes from the Spanish "sabana," which means "a large plain covered with snow," but snow in Cuba becomes water, and "savannah" becomes a swamp. That is what purchasers bought. The story of La Gloria is too well known. Today this colony is wrestling victory from defeat, but in Bahia Honda the lands thus acquired are being abandoned or given away, while household goods, the last earthly possessions, are being sold to enable the unfortunate colonists to get away from their disastrous investments.

There are many cases of these swindles in Cuba, just as there is much land that is worthless. The golden tales of rich soil that will produce perpetual crops are not myths, nor yet are they universally true. The story of the colonies of Cuba will tell of many happy and contented settlers, and of many who have invested in fruit or cane lands with responsible holders and development companies where transportation facilities are adequate, where the capital is at hand for the erection of sawmills, refrigerating plants, schools, and the like, and this phase is the pleasant one. I have seen twenty-five feet of all alluvial soil so rich that it is almost fertilizer in itself, and orange trees two and three years old that were producing fruit that was the equal of that from trees four and five years old in Florida and California. Still, one of the leading cultivators, George Gillette of the Development Company of Cuba,

is responsible for the statement: "Let no farmer come to Cuba thinking that he will meet no difficulties. The soil is here and the climate is here, but for every obstacle he met at home he will meet ten here. This soil is rich—the richest in the world—and it will not yield up its riches without a fierce struggle. When it does yield the reward is great."

Along with the swindles of the sale of bad lands there have been the swindles of land titles, so that the occupant who has struggled with the soil and is beginning to see his reward suddenly finds that he is not the owner of the property for which he has paid. In popular estimation, therefore, Cuban land titles are in bad favor. A very careful examination of this situation leads to the conclusion that the fault lies, not with the Cuban system of registry, either in theory or in practice, but with the purchaser. It is useless to throw the blame and responsibility wholly upon the unscrupulous seller, whether Cuban, Spaniard or American, who may be a squatter merely, or one who holds the land only on an option. One cannot easily fancy the purchaser of land in the United States taking nothing but the would-be seller's word for the fact that his deed or lease would be good, and not following with a legal examination of title. It is almost unbelievable, therefore, that in countless instances of the purchase of Cuban lands, from ignorance or carelessness, there has been no proper examination of title, and many losses have occurred thereby. There is one case that has come to be almost a cause célèbre of a young American who leased certain grazing lands, imported herds and turned them loose upon what he supposed to be his ranges, only to awake one morning to find himself and 35,000 head roaming wild, having been evicted "without process of law." The case is now in the United States Senate for some unaccountable reason, and entirely because there was no examination of the lessor's right to lease.

It is not to be supposed for a moment that such men as the Havemeyers, the Tobacco Trust directors and others would have placed millions of their hard-earned dollars in lands that were either worthless or of doubtful title, still the cry can be heard, in reply to which there is one obvious admonition, that reasonable investigation and precaution are necessary, and that the main security lies only in connection with established and reputable interests.

CUBA, LAND OF SUGAR AND SPENDTHRIFTS

TO THE NEW YORK HERALD: The economic situation in Cuba is fundamentally as sound as ever. There is no doubt that the paralyzed condition prevailing here at this time is purely monetary and political and is in no way linked or identified with Cuba's basic ability to produce sugar cheaply.

In the production of sugar Porto Rico is not a formidable competitor. In the first place her total production is only about 450,000 tons, or not enough to supply the entire United States for six weeks. Besides, Porto Rico can never compete without some stimulation in the form of a protective tariff, as her lands do not yield the large output of the Cuban soil and have to be replanted approximately every two and a half years even when highly fertilized. In Cuba cane is grown and cut from the same plant for twenty years without fertilization.

Hawaii produces about 500,000 tons, which is only another six weeks' ration for the United States.

Cuba's real competition comes from Java, which at this time last year had delivered into the United States over 880,000 tons of sugar. The very lowest figure at which Java could put sugar on an American dock is about 4.75 cents a pound, the total being apportioned as follows:

Cost and freight	2.75 cents
Duty	2.00 cents
Total	4.75 cents

The Cuban planter, economically situated, could meet this price and make a profit of 20 per cent.

As to the monetary situation to which I have referred, the Cuban is always in the pawnshop and needing money, but in these times his collateral has gone and the bankers are faced with this problem, as one of them clearly put it the other night: Suppose you own a pawnshop and a man comes to you and says: "Here's my watch, lend me some money." In a few days more he says, "Here's my ring," and gets some more money on that. A few

days later all his belongings are brought into the pawnshop and money is raised on them. He still needs more money, but he has no more collateral. Some day you look out of the window of your pawnshop and you see this man in a torn and tattered undershirt with all his collateral gone. What would you, as a banker, do in that case?

This is the situation as it exists today in Cuba. All the spending of money which one sees in the streets is done on credit. It is a common joke in town that the banks have more paper in "pagares" (promissory notes) than they have in money. But this is temporary, and if Cuba can pass this crisis she will be down to a manufacturing cost against which no nation or people in the world can compete or have ever been able to compete.

Less than twenty-five years ago I saw cane carts full of good cane being drawn by three or four teams of oxen on their way to the mills to have the cane converted into sugar. The price of sugar was one and seven-eighths cents a pound, cost and freight to New York. How the men were paid, the carts built, the oxen obtained I don't know, but they were.

At that time the sugar planters did not have the fine machinery they now have and they were losing as high as 10 per cent of the sugar in the cane. Today they lose 1.4 per cent, or less, due to improved methods. And the marvellous sun and soil of Cuba are still there. But we must get down our manufacturing costs. Empty bags are now sold at 12 cents each as compared with 60 cents last year. Freights, labor, food—all must come down. Once restored to normal Cuba will show the world once more that no spot on this planet can compete with her in the production of sugar.

Last season I saw a young negro who had just received \$50 as a cane cutter for work of probably two weeks. He wore patent leather shoes, white flannel trousers, a straw hat with a silk band and a gold ring and stick pin. With his \$50 he bought at the plantation store ten silk ties at \$3 each and two bottles of perfume at \$10 a bottle.

Another instance of some of the past economic errors of Cuba came to my attention during one of my long horseback rides through the interior.

About noon one day we came to a little hut with an earthen floor. The occupants were a man of about 50 and his wife and four children

My companion and myself asked for a little coffee, intending to proceed on our journey afterward; but in the truly delightful manner of the Cuban guajiro (farmer) he insisted on our dismounting and entering his hut. The family had just had their almuerzo (noon meal); and on the rough nailed boards constituting the dining table were a package of cut sugar from Brooklyn, two empty cans of the finest boneless French sardines in olive oil, empty cans of breast of chicken, three empty cans of California giant asparagus, two glass jars of costly American bacon and a tin of golden rusks. These things are expensive enough in any big city in the United States, but to find them in the interior of the island of Cuba means that they cost the consumer about three times the original American retail price.

After coffee the farmer said he would accompany us to the town, about eight miles away, and begged a minute or two delay while he chased round and caught a pig. He tied its legs with heavy cord (made in the United States), lifted it on his saddle (made in the United States) and so joined us for the journey to the town store.

This man carried the pig to the store and sold it for cash, and with this cash, in the same store, he loaded his saddle bags with tins of sausages made in Chicago, tins of lard, rice, more bacon in glass jars, ink fish in cans, paté de foies gras, French peas and preserved California fruits.

This is only one instance of the economic errors of the people and for which they are now paying the piper. But this man still has his wonderful land and still grows his rich cane. All he asks for now is the money to pay his laborers so as to harvest the cane and keep the fields clean of weeds.

During the recent high prices of sugar conditions in Havana reflected the opulence of sugar farmers. They poured into the city, where some of them walked on sidewalks for the first time in their lives. Their pockets were full of gold and their heads devoid of any sane methods of handling it.

They bought high priced American and foreign automobiles and paid liveried chauffeurs their own price to drive them—with gasoline at 54 cents a gallon.

A farmer entered the largest diamond store in Havana. He was wearing the typical Panama hat of the country folks; the rest

of his costume was a blue shirt with pockets like a coat and with the tails outside his trousers, a stiff starched pair of crude linen trousers creased down the sides, and a pair of screaming new yellow shoes which squeaked at every step of his stockingless feet. He said to the attendant: "I have no jewelry of any kind, and I want to get fixed up."

He selected a jewelled gold watch, a pearl and platinum chain, two handsome Oriental sapphire and diamond rings, a beautiful pearl and diamond scarf pin and a gold and diamond cigarette case.

"Well, Chico, how much is all this?" The clerk figured and replied, "\$10,500."

The farmer looked at his purchases again and said: "Well, all right, but put in about \$4,500 more and then I'll be all right."

That farmer is back now on the farm. He is eating rice and beans and working eighteen hours a day. His lands are producing the same old 1,000 tons of cane a caballeria, and instead of paying his cane cutters \$7.50 to \$10 a day he is promising them \$1 a day and their food.

The farmer can keep this up as long as he has the rice and beans, but our bankers and politicians must see that his supplies do not stop, otherwise his fields will grow full of weeds and instead of producing 1,000 tons of cane a caballeria of land he will be producing only 100 tons, and that will soon reflect itself in Cuba's ability to produce sugar at low prices.

If this is neglected \$600,000,000 of American capital now invested in the sugar industry in Cuba will be partially or totally lost.

ALFRED J. THOMPSON.

Havana, Cuba, June 25, 1921







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